

***City of Burien***

**BURIEN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

March 27, 2007

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

**MINUTES**

**Planning Commission Members Present:**

Robert Simpson-Clark, Jim Clingan, Rebecca McInteer, Jon Newton, Janet Shull

**Absent:**

Stacie Grage, Michael Sumner

**Others Present:**

David Johanson, planner; Gerry Lindsay, minutes taker

**Roll Call**

Chair Simpson-Clark called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Upon the call of the roll all commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Grage and Sumner.

**Agenda Confirmation**

Motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Clingan. Second was by Commissioner Shull and the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment** – None

**Approval of Minutes** – None

**Old Business**

- A. Discussion and Recommendation Regarding the Downtown Parking Stakeholder Group Recommendation Report

Senior Planner David Johanson said the Parking Stakeholder Group finalized its recommendation and reviewed its final draft on February 21. The group's process included a public meeting at which all business people and interested parties were invited to provide feedback on the initial recommendations. The final report is now before the Planning Commission and the Business and Economic Development Partnership for review.

Chair Simpson-Clark praised the City for being out in front of any potential parking problem in the downtown. He suggested that the recommendation represents a bare-bones approach that will need to be fleshed out over time. If the report is adopted, some energy will need to be put into how the fee in-lieu program would work. The report represents a very workable system. It remains to be seen whether or not Burien will have the political will necessary to make the tough decisions and tell those who cannot live with the regulations that they should not be located in the downtown. The rules will hurt some businesses by cutting them out, but that is in fact their intent. He noted his readiness for approving the report and passing it on to the City Council.

Commissioner Shull offered her support for the document as well and praised staff and the stakeholders group for their good work. She said the City will need to have the parking plan implemented in the downtown in order to manage what in the future will be an increased demand on the parking supply.

Commissioner Shull said the fee in-lieu component will be vitally important and should be recommended to the Council as well. She called attention to item 7 on page 20 of the report and the statement “The parking in-lieu fees should not be collected if there is insufficient supply available, i.e. collecting a fee when there is not enough supply to accommodate the anticipated demand.” She suggested that the City may find itself needing to amass a certain number of fee in-lieu payments before being able to acquire a property or develop a parking structure. There should be some ability to collect fees for improvements provided they will come on line within a certain timeframe.

Chair Simpson-Clark commented that in the past the City has made provision to postpone collecting fees for undergrounding utilities provided the property owner signs an agreement to participate when a project comes around. Commissioner Shull agreed that would be one potential solution. The City should not, however, box itself into the situation of not being far enough ahead and having to say no to collecting the fees.

Mr. Johanson said the concern is tied to collecting a fee that does not directly relate to a specific mitigation.

Commissioner Clingan noted that he was a member of the stakeholders group and said he is relatively happy with the report and its recommendations. The group met for nearly a year and revised its conclusions over that time. With regard to the City hall/library project, the original thinking was that there would be 120 parking stalls; that figure has dropped to only 60, which is disconcerting given that there were some 50 at the old city hall and 100 at the old library. The new Elliott Bay Brew Pub is drawing quite a few customers, and many of them are finding it necessary to seek parking at other businesses; many of them could choose to park at the new city hall/library when it is completed.

Commissioner Clingan suggested that the City will be starting from a weak position with a parking shortfall even before the development of Town Square gets under way. The fee in-lieu will represent a catch-up situation, which will be problematic.

Commissioner Clingan said the likelihood is that the City will adopt a fee in-lieu program and seek to construct a parking facility for the public to use. He said he hopes the City will not have to claim eminent domain in order to do that.

Commissioner McInteer said she is also happy with the report on the whole. The difficulty will lie with finding the balance in accommodating the parking needs of existing businesses and new businesses. She said she does not know the facts well enough to be able to say that will absolutely happen, but added that staff does and will act accordingly. The new businesses that choose to locate in the downtown will be part of the revitalization of the city. She agreed with Commissioner Clingan about not wanting to have to play catch-up, and agreed with Commissioner Shull regarding the need for a fee in-lieu program.

Mr. Johanson said since incorporation the City has had a strong desire to see the downtown revitalized. As changes occur, it will be necessary to find the middle ground in accommodating the needs of the existing and new businesses. The parking study, however, makes it clear that parking is not the primary problem. Downtown areas do not live or die based on how much parking they have but rather on the strength of the businesses that are there and the activity they generate. One of the key recommendations of the parking study is the need for education regarding parking management.

Chair Simpson-Clark commented that once the private parking stalls are removed from the total number of parking spaces in the downtown, the picture begins to look more like downtown Seattle. Over time that will mean restrictions rather than increases for on-street parking in the downtown. If the Town Square project is successful, it can be expected that the adjacent large parking lots will see fairly rapid redevelopment, and that could mean a parking distribution problem, if not a total quantity problem, sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Shull asked if the additional through streets that will be developed as part of the Town Square project will include on-street parking spaces. Mr. Johanson said there will be more than 80 new on-street stalls created as part of the development.

Commissioner Shull asked if the 60 stalls for the city hall/library project will be constructed in such a way as to allow for future expansion vertically. Mr. Johanson said that is the plan; the initial design for the development was for a two-story parking structure, and there is nothing to say that the second story will not be constructed in the future.

Chair Simpson-Clark opened the floor to comments from the audience.

Mr. Dick Dahlgard said he started with a retail business in Burien in 1960 and retired in January 2007. He said his original store was on SW 152<sup>nd</sup> Street and had only three parking stalls which were often utilized by patrons of other businesses. The business was moved to 1st Avenue South in 1978 to a site that controlled 20 parking spots. He suggested that Burien will be the only city in King County with its city hall located in the primary retail center of the community. That makes no sense; it would be far better to have city hall located on SW 136<sup>th</sup> Street or over by the courthouse. Having Burien's city hall in the retail core will detract from the ability of the City to have better retail businesses in the downtown. The 60 parking spaces at the city hall/library building will not be enough; the result will be a real bottleneck.

Chair Simpson-Clark pointed out that the City has purchased the lot behind the AT&T building as a place for city hall employees to park. Mr. Dahlgard questioned whether the employees will want to park that far away and walk to work.

Mr. Len Boscarine, 1600 SW 156<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke as president of the Burien Library Guild. He questioned whether the 60 parking spaces for the city hall/library, even with additional on-street spaces, will be adequate. Adding 40,000 square feet of retail and 400 condominiums to the downtown will require far more parking than has been outlined.

Mr. Johanson pointed out that the new retail and condominium uses will be required to provide parking. Each development will have parking facilities to accommodate the new uses in addition to the 80-plus on-street parking stalls. The lot next to the AT&T building is and will be available for anyone to park in, and it will not have any time limits associated with it.

Mr. William Iverson questioned whether the on-street parking stalls that will be created as part of the Town Square project will be able to handle both Mick Kelley's and Elliott Bay Pub. He suggested it will not. He pointed out that the Russet Group is set to take possession of the rest of the Grocery Outlet property in early April, and Food Development Services will no longer be in the picture. The City is in effect allowing new businesses special concessions relative to parking. For a restaurant that has a capacity of 175, eight parking spaces is not enough, and the overflow will have to find other places to park. The City will not be able to continue ignoring the problem. If there is not a sufficient supply of parking, customers will stop coming to the downtown and everyone will lose. The problems will only

increase as Town Square is developed and the city hall/library project is built. History makes it clear that parking is an issue; Burien was abandoned with the opening of Southcenter, and the reason was the availability of parking. Underground parking in Burien is not a good idea at all given the high water table. Mr. Iverson said he has had to increase his liability coverage to protect against customers being hit in the parking lot.

Mr. Boscarine said the concerns of the Library Guild began with the effort to get the bond issue passed. At that time, the word was that the new library would be a third larger with plenty of parking. Since that time the plans have changed gradually. The latest blow is the fact that there will be only 60 parking spaces, and those will be shared with city hall. The Burien representative on the King County Library System District Board says the limit on the number of parking spaces is what the City of Burien wants. Now instead of a magnificent new library building, it will be combined with city hall and will be smaller because construction costs have increased. The library board should stand up and deliver on what it promised to the citizens of Burien.

Mr. Johanson said if the recommendation goes forward and the Council recommends pursuing the proposed policies, it will be necessary to make sure the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the policies, and that will necessitate a public process.

Commissioner Shull suggested that the comments from the public highlight the need for the City to move forward with an implementation plan that will address the parking needs and get out in front. The city is changing and new businesses are coming in, but those changes are making it more difficult to find parking. Policies need to be put in place that will give the City the tools it will need over time as the downtown continues to move toward becoming an urban center.

Mr. Johanson said the recommendations of the Business and Economic Development Partnership and the Planning Commission will be brought before the council during a study session. Once an implementation plan is developed, the City will be able to put the various actions into play.

Commissioner Clingan suggested that questions regarding the number of parking stalls to be created as part of the city hall/library project should be put directly to the City Council and to staff.

Commissioner McInteer proposed prioritizing the implementation recommendations contained in the stakeholders group report. Chair Simpson-Clark agreed, noting that the priority order established by the commission could, and likely will, change as they work through the process.

Commissioner Shull suggested that the policy changes and Zoning Code changes must go hand-in-hand and should be the top priority. Second, developing a funding program and getting it into place will be critically important. Ensuring a long-term parking supply should be third. Accordingly, recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 11 should be the commission's top-ranked priorities. The remainder of the recommendations entail day-to-day implementation strategies that will not require policy changes.

Motion to forward to the council a recommendation to approve the recommendations of the Downtown Burien Parking Study stakeholders group, along with the proposed implementation plan with items 1, 2, 3 and 11 as the top priorities, was made by Commissioner Shull. Second was by Commissioner Clingan and the motion carried unanimously.

**New Business** – None

**Director's Report**

Mr. Johanson reminded the commissioners of the joint meeting with the City Council on Monday, April 9. He noted that the regular April 10 commission meeting has been canceled.

**Adjournment**

Chair Simpson-Clark adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Simpson-Clark, chair  
Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Greenberg, director  
Community Development Department